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RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0325
RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0336
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0235
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0176
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0524
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/C
USUN FOR DMUERS
PARIS FOR RKANEDA
LONDON FOR PLORD
NAIROBI FOR AKARAS
AFRICOM FOR JKUGEL
INR FOR CNEARY
DRL FOR SCRAMPTON

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SUBJECT: UNDP AND REBELS FRUSTRATED WITH CARG FOOT-DRAGGING ON DDR

REF: A: 09 BANGUI 118

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) campaign in the Central African Republic (CAR), launched in August 2009 with much fanfare, has slowed considerably in pace causing frustration in increasingly impatient rebels. The government's (CARG) lack of will, and specifically actions of its principal interlocutor with rebels and the international community, Minister of Communication Cyriac Gonda, is irritating both the UN and the relevant rebels groups and threatens the stability of the peace process just six months before the planned elections of March 2010. In this context, POLOFF, the acting DATT, and the US Air Force C-12 crew from Accra, Ghana visited Paoua in northwestern CAR on October 15, 2009 to meet with local government officials, international peacekeepers and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). By happenstance, the above mentioned also met the spokesman and military commander of the western sector of the rebel Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD), Colonel Henri Tchabo aka Colonel Wafio. The Colonel confirmed the reestablishment of APRD road blocks around their area of operation, expressed his displeasure with the slow pace of the DDR's roll out, but affirmed his overall commitment to peace with the government.
END SUMMARY.

UNDP FRUSTRATED, SHIFTING GEARS

¶2. (SBU) On September 30th, 2009, the Charge and POLOFF met with the Senior DDR Advisor working for the Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery at the UN Development Program (UNDP) who is following the DDR process in the CAR. She was irritated with the CARG continued foot dragging in the process despite the

launch of the sensitization campaign in August.

-- A particular sticking point is the 8 billion CFA (approximately 17 million USD) pledged by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) for the process which the CARG claims it alone controls and which is not necessarily earmarked for the DDR process.

-- In an effort to get the government to reengage the funds, the UNDP is now saying that they will fund the first two D - Disarmament and Demobilization - but that Reintegration must be handled by the CARG.

--The UNDP also informed Post of disturbing rumors of graft within the CARG - according to her ``well placed sources'', only 50 million CFA (110,000 USD) of 250 million CFA (556,000 USD) set aside by President Bozize for the sensitization campaign at the start of the DDR process was spent for its actual purpose. It was the UNDP's firm conviction that Minister Gonda absconded with the rest of the funds.

The UNDP is fully aware of the lack of political will at the highest levels of the government and are hoping that by forcing them to take responsibility for Reintegration; they will eliminate any potential blame that the CARG may seek to place upon the international community if the process fails.

WORRYING DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND

13. (SBU) During the last week of September and the first week of October, all of the major rebel signatories to the DDR process have begun to express dissatisfaction with the progression of the program:

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-- The Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), the Libyan-backed group headed by Abdoulaye Miskine, has reinstated barriers in their zone between Kabo and Sido on the Chadian boarder. The groups did so in protest of the arrest of two officers and frustration on the ground with the lack of promised funds from the DDR process. It is also probable that Miskine is annoyed that he has yet to be named to the diplomatic post he was promised for signing onto the process.

-- The Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) based in the northeast stated publically what Post has speculated for some time - They will be unable to demobilize as long as their Kara foes in the Vakaga remain armed. Minister Gonda is due in Birao to start the sensitization campaign in mid-October.

-- The APRD published a press release this week announcing the resetting of their road blocks in all the zones under their control because the GARG had not lived up to their promises. They stated that due to limited funding from the government, ``we cannot pay for the cost of our member's food or offer them coffee [a Central African term for kick backs]''.

ACCIDENTAL MEETING WITH A REBEL

14. (SBU) In an exceptionally Central African moment, POLOFF, the DATT and the three crew members of the C-12 were greeted at the Paoua airstrip by the three forces of order in the prefecture: the head of the Central African Army's (FACA) detachment, the head of the Congolese peacekeepers from the regional peacekeeping force (MICOPAX) and the aforementioned Colonel Wafio. The DATT was struck by the amicable body language between the Congolese and Wafio and their evident coolness towards the FACA (NOTE: Indications of the FACA's lack of professionalism were striking - later in the afternoon, after ``not being able to meet earlier'', the FACA commander showed up considerably inebriated and was unable to recall how many soldiers he had

under his command. END NOTE).

15. (SBU) After a meeting with the commander of the MICOPAX unit based in Paoua, Colonel Wafio unexpectedly walked into the Congolese canteen where we were seated. Accompanied by Arnaud Guettel, the APRD's newly minted representative on the Independent Electoral Commission, Wafio cut surprisingly serene persona for a rebel commander and was dressed in a blue jean outfit. Wafio, known to be smart and well respected due to his humble roots, also has a darker side: He is thought to have ordered a group whipping of this predecessor as APRD spokesman in April 2009 for killing a prominent Paoua cattle trader. The former commander's whereabouts are currently unknown.

16. (SBU) POLOFF commenced the discussion by reaffirming the long standing position of Post - that the rebels must join the legitimate opposition and put down their weapons as peace is in the interest of all Central Africans and the international community. POLOFF also stressed that the barriers should be taken down and that a negotiated solution with the government was needed. A discussion ensued where Wafio confirmed that the end goal of the APRD was peace and that government indolence was to blame. He stated that if the government took the DDR seriously there would be no problems. Importantly, when asked about the plans of the APRD for the elections, Wafio returned to his insistence that the DDR process must actually start. According to the rebel, if the Disarmament and Demobilization processes were on course then APRD would be fine with elections and a more long term Reinsertion campaign. He also said that the presence of MICOPAX military observers for the DDR process would be a good sign that the process was moving along. This last

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statement suggests Wafio is following events in Bangui closely - The UNDP was just in Libreville to discuss with MICOPAX's command about the set up of observers.

17. (SBU) While Wafio remained calm throughout; his deputy became quite animated at our insistence that the APRD pull down its road blocks and disarm. According to Guettel, the region is facing a double menace of armed cattle herders, who take many forms, and the Chadian Army. As noted in previous reporting (Ref A), the north of the CAR is virtually ungoverned by Bangui and the large pastoral expanses are often the source of tension between the sedentary Central African farmers and pastoralist coming from the north. According to a UN source, the APRD and other local militias are in constant conflict with Fulani/Peuhl/Mbororo herders and cattle raisers from Chad. Apparently some of the larger herds are owned by members of the Chadian security apparatus and it is not uncommon that soldiers from the Chadian Army are sent to settle disagreements across the border. So while Post doubts that it is the active policy of the Chadian government to violate the territory of the CAR, it is clear that individuals with economic interest and military ties are willing to use elements from the Chadian army to settle their disputes. More fundamentally, Guettel's agitation plainly displays a deep flaw in the DDR process - without a capacity by the FACA or the CARG to project order over its territory, local inhabitants will be invariably forced to take arms to protect their interests.

18. (SBU) COMMENT: The latest reestablishment of barriers and increased rhetoric by the different rebel groups is likely a negotiation tactic and should not lead to violence in the short term. Each group knows they stand to gain more from the DDR than from renewed hostility. But it is hard to imagine that the APRD and other armed actors in the north do not understand that disarming will leave them exposed to others not a part of the DDR process. Thus, when taken in concert with the statement that they really are only pushing for the short term payout from the Disarmament and Demobilization and that the Reintegration can ``come later'', it remains difficult to be optimistic about the long term prospects of the DDR process. END COMMENT.
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